

At the Committee on the Budget's hearing regarding U.S. debt burdens last week, Congressman Blumenauer emphasized the continued need to prepare the U.S. economy for the future. In an exchange with Douglas Holtz-Eakin, director of the Congressional Budget Office from 2003 to 2005, Blumenauer focused on his priority to rebuild and renew America by reforming the way transportation projects are paid for. "For over fifty years, there has been an agreement in this country, going back to President Eisenhower, about a self supporting trust fund for infrastructure investment," Mr. Blumenauer stated. "Ronald Reagan, in 1982 when economic times were tough, supported a 5 cent increase in the gas tax - a user fee - that helped us move forward."



Blumenauer noted that the Highway Trust Fund was no longer able to finance even routine maintenance, and that a broad consensus of interests from the Chamber of Commerce to AAA

to construction unions had previously testified in favor of reforming the system. “Is that part of a solution that might get us moving in this direction, put people to work, protect the budget deficit, and maybe even reduce dependence on foreign oil?”

Mr. Holtz-Eakin agreed that a renewed focus on infrastructure investment, coupled with reform of our current system, would move America forward. He called for effectively financing our transportation investments, and finding a way to move beyond the “obsolete” gas tax to an alternative system.